THE ADVENTURES OF STANLEY BROOKE

THE DELIBERATE DETECTIVE

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

THE Hon. Stanley Brooke leaned back in his steamer-chair and awned. A pleasant and bracing and blew in his face, the whitetopped waves were all aglint with synshine. His surroundings were altogether delightful. There was, in fact, only one circumstance which made him inclined by one distorted arm. His white lips, to regret this suddenly arranged trip across the Atlantic. This was his third were still parted. He could have been day out, and he was bored. delightful. There was, in fact, only one day out, and he was bored.

The boat was a medium-sized one and not one of the fastest. The people and not one of the fastest. The people The bedroom steward staggered were mostly Americans of the tourist his feet and shook his head. type, a handful of business men-and Gordon Black. Brooke, whenever he tried to think of any one of them, found himself always thinking of Black.

The man passed as he sat theretall, hard-featured, his hands clasped behind him, his eyes bent upon the deck. The invalid who lay flat in a chair by Brooke's side stretched out a hand and touched his neighbor on the

"Tell me," he asked in a quavering ice, "is that really Mr. Gordon Black? That is his name," Brooke replied.

"He looks rather an interesting char-Do you know anything about The little man looked at his ques-

Black!" he repeated. "Why, a year of two ago he was the most talkedof man in the States!"
"Why?" Brooke

celebrity, then?" little man-he called himself Dr.

Browning, but admitted that he was only a dentist—sighed.
"Of course, you're English," he re-marked, "and you wouldn't read our papers. Gordon Black was the head of

a great railroad trust. He ran up against another trust, controlled by Seth Pryor, and they had the greatest finan-cial struggle that the history of American finance has ever known. In the end, Black was maneuvered

into a false position. He broke the law and had to leave the country, It has alsome sort of an agreement between him and his enemies that, if he left, his fol-lowers should be spared. That's the idea, at any rate. Anyway, during the last two months

Seth Pryor has suddenly begun to squeeze Black's followers. Black is on his way back to fight him, and Seth Pryor has sworn that as soon as he sets foot in New York he'll have him arrested."
"It sounds interesting," Brooke con-

"It is interesting," the other declared. He leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes with the air of one fatigued by conversation. Brooke took up his book and set it down again. Afterward he decided that it must have been some mesmeric instinct which prompted him at that precise moment to struggle up from his comfortable seat, throw aside his rug, and

away from him, but in the second-class portion of the ship, a girl, was leaning over the rail, bending far she had turned a little sidewise.

Without a moment's hesitation he crossed the narrow plankway and step-ped to her side.

"Miss Robinson!" he exclaimed eagerly. "It really is you, then!" She turned and looked at him. She was a little startled. Taken so completely by surprise, she seemed to forget for the moment her somewhat uncompromising attitude. Her beautiful eyes were lit with something very like pleasure, her lips parted into almost The moment was a revelation. For the first time Brooke realized that she was beautiful.
"It really is you, then," she mur-

"But what on earth-" he began. "I thought you were going to a post in the country."

Already her manner was stiffening. A

touch of the old sullenness was in her tone. She had been taken by surprise. think that you might have told he proteste She was already in revolt.

And why?" already accepted charity from you. I have lived for twenty-four years in England, twelve of which have been blankly miserable. I am going to start again

"Are you going to New York?"
"To New York," she assented,
"You have a position?" She hesitated. She answered him

grudgingly. I have a place," she admitted. "Forgive me, but you must go now. Firstclass passengers are not allowed here. why you treat me as though I wanted to pick your pocket. I want to be your

She turned away, her manner reluctantly ungracious.
"It is not possible," she said. "My friendship, anyhow, isn't worth having.

She disappeared through the com Brooke retraced his steps panionway. Brooke retraced his steps slowly to his own deck. As he crossed the bridge he was conscious of being watched. He raised his eyes. Mr. Gor-don Black was leaning over the rail, deeply interested now in the uncoiling

watched. He raised his eyes. Mr. Gordon Black was leaning over she rail, deeply interested now in the uncoiling of a rope below.

That night, or rather in the small hours of the morning, the silence of the great ship was broken by the sound of hurrying footsteps along the passage outside Brooke's stateroom, a hoarse murmuring of voices, the flying feet of an urgent messenger. Brooke made his way back to his own out of the ship. He spent nearly an hour in putting a few cautious inquiries. Then he rejoined Constance, who was still sitting in her corner reading, and who watched his approach with evident of hurrying footsteps along the passage outside Brooke's stateroom, a hoarse murmuring of voices, the flying feet of an urgent messenger. Brooke of the said of the silence of the said of the

"Anything the matter?" he asked. The steward whom he addressed seemed scarcely to hear him. Brooke made his way to the spot where the little group was congregated. Something dark was stretched across the passageway. Brooke looked down upon it with a shudder.

It was the body of a man

"Did any one see it happen?" Brooke demanded.

"I passed along here not three min-ites ago, sir," he declared, "and there

wasn't a sign of any one." "Do you know who he is?" Brooke

"He's got the end stateroom a little further along," the bath-room steward beclared, "I dunno his name." The man's name was Blessing He was of cheerful and sociable dis-position, and appeared to have talked

to every one on board. He had never mentioned his profes-ion, but a card in his pocketbook bore he had never mentance book bore on, but a card in his pocketbook bore on, but a card in his pocketbook bore on, but a card in his pocketbook bore the inscription of "Agent,

dress at an office on Broadway. He had never been seen to quarrel with any one. The half-torn letter in his pocket wa

domestic and unimportant.

The staterooms opposite the spot where he had been found were empty with the exception of two, one of which was occupied by a Mr. Baines, who was with the doctor in his room at the time.

the affair occurred; and the other by Robbery was an impossible motive, as the murdered man had frankly con-feased himself short of money, had made application to the purser for loan, and had dispatched a marcon gram for a clerk to meet him on the

quay with funds. The cause of death was a blow dealt with some blunt instrument which was not forthcoming.

Brooke listened to the gossip,

to what every one had to say, and made a few inquiries on his own account. They led him, however, to nothing in the shape of a definite conclusion. Then, a little later, while talking with the captain in his room, the latter handed him a marconigram.
"What do you make of this?" he

asked. "It was addressed to Blessing. Under the circumstances, I felt justi fied in opening it."

Brooke glanced at the flimsy sheet.

It consisted only of a few words:

Look out. T is on board.

"Unsigned," he murmured.
"Unfortunately," the captain replied, "If we only knew who sent it, we might know who 'T' was." "Hard luck!" Brooke declared. "Try

one of these."
The captain accepted one visitor's cigarettes and parted from him, a few minutes later, without any very exalted opinion of his young friend's intelligence.

Stroll along the deck.

On his second time around he came to an abrupt standstill at the aft extremity of the promenade deck. A few ing day, he had seen Constance Robinson, he glanced up. She was leaning against the rail in

forward with folded arms, in an atti-tude which seemed to him somehow cap in salutation, she beckoned him to her. He crossed the dividing pridge "You've heard about the murder, of

urse?" she asked brusquely.
"Naturally," Brooke admitted She looked at him for a moment, a grim smile upon her lips. "Who murdered Mr. Blessing?"

"No idea!" "And you on the spot!" she exclaim ed derisively. "Fancy calling yourself a man of observation!"

"In this instance," he said simply, am afraid that I must confess myself a failure. I have made a great many inquiries, but they have led nowhere. Perhans you can help me?"

suddenly became grave. "As it happens," she replied, "I can. Come nearer."

He stood close to her side. Constance glanced around and drew him to the side of the boat.

"Mr. Blessing was murmured by a man named Gordon Black," she told him. "Perhaps, as I can tell you the name of the guilty person, you can do

the rest."
"How do you know?" Brooke asked She frowned.
"Mr. Blessing was my new employ-

er," she told him. "He was a private detective in New York. I did some typing for him, and he formed the idea that I was intelligent enough to be of "What do you know about Gordon keen.

"It know that Mr. Blessing had been to England to collect evidence against him for complicity in the Jersey River Railway scandal, whatever that may be full alibi." Brooke ventured to point out.

"It must have been Gordon Black, a truthful him for complicity in the Jersey River Railway scandal, whatever that may be full alibi." Brooke ventured to point out.

"It alibi." Brooke ventured to point out.

"It can't help it," she persisted obstinately "Mr. Blessing told me himself that he was afraid of him. Those partial typou this much more, if you like. Less than forty-eight hours ago Gordon Black offered Mr. Blessing the declared.

"It must have been Gordon Black," the way."

A queer little smile flickered for a moment upon the gray lips. The man's face was almost ghastly.

"There isn't any chance of that," he said simply. "I'd like to live out the said simply. The purser came along and paused to talk cheerfully for a few minutes it to talk cheerfully for a few minutes to talk cheerfully for a few minutes to talk cheerfully for a few minutes it to talk cheerfully for a few minutes it to talk cheerfully for a few minutes to talk cheerfully for a few minutes it to talk cheerfully for a few minute "I know that Mr. Blessing had been

expect it is in Gordon Black's now!

"I'll tell you this much more, if you pers included a forged transfer. He meant having them. He had offered meant having twenty-five thousand twenty-five thousand pounds for a document in his possession—an illegal transfer, or something of the sort. Mr. Blessing twenty-five thousand pounds for them and was refused. Brooke pointed to a school of porpoises, a client—Gordon Black's recent and the sort of the sor Brooke made his way back to his own art of the ship. He spent nearly an "Give evidence against Gordon Black"

"Let us talk about something else," "Let us talk about something else," he suggested. "What are you going to do when you get to New York."

"Give evidence against Gordon Black

THE MURDER OF WILLIAM BLESSING

five and twenty to twelve."

"From ten o'clock until the news of the affair was brought there Black was playing bridge in the smoking room." The girl frowned.

'Is that certain?" "Is that certain?"

"Absolutely," he assured her. "I have it from the smoking room steward, and Major Bryce—who was one of the four. Without a doubt he was in the smoking room when the affair took place."

She seemed a little staggered. For a few moments she said nothing.

"Failing Mr. Gordon Black," Brooke continue."

There is no doubt whatever as to minutes, aren't you?" the fellow piped touched him on the shoulder and pretime when the murder took place, out, his thin voice shriller and weaker was between half past eleven and than ever. "I've had a had night, and I'm nervous this morning. Say, what "Left in your cabin, sir," the man re"Well?"
"Well?"
"From ten o'clock thirl the news of York?"
"From ten o'clock thirl the news of York?"
"Recoke watched his neighbor break

that I can see

"Left in your cibin, sir," the man resplied, as he turned away.

Brooke watched his neighbor break the seal of the letter and read its con-

of paper.
He seemed at first a little dazed; he

Brooke seated himself: The cheering the seal of the letter and read its contract up of the man seemed to be a charge the seal of the letter and read its contract. They seemed to consist of a topon the whole ship's company.

"About Friday morning," he replied into minutes and the eyes of the reader that I can see."

his fingers.

"Let me see—today is Tuesday. Then there's Wednesday and Thursday—two whole days! I reckon I'll last that long—somehow," he added wistfully.

Brooke laughed at him.

The seemed at hist after haze a first a little haze a first a little haze, the had the appearance of a man who had the appearance of a man

terrupted, "the man Blessing was murdered just outside my stateroom there—
only a few feet away, mind, I was
lying where I am now. I heard the
souffle, the blow, the groan."

"Your man, right enough," Brooks
remarked to the detective.

"That's Tim, sure," was the prompt
reply. "I wish to God I'd believe it,
and we woundn't have bungled the job!"

He opened his coat; a long envelope, apparently stuffed with papers, was

lying there. Brooke gazed at it with fascinated eyes.

"Why haven't you mentioned it be-fore-told the captain or some one?" he asked.

should go straight from my hands to weird dishes, with just one or two we the chief of police in New York," he said. "Everything is talked about on board ship. I decided to keep silent. Since then I have been terrified—almost "What do you mean?" she asked. to death. Last night and the night be-fore a man has been in my room. My trunk, the cushions here, have been searched. I lay shivering in my bunk. The packet was between my two mat-

Who was the man?" Brooke asked. "I couldn't reach the light-I dared not have turned it on if I could have done so," was the almost plaintive re-ply, "It might have been a steward. ply. "It might have been a steward like had courage once—but now—you see what I am. I can't bear another night. want you to take this packet. Once more he produced the envelope.

Brooke took it. "What am I to do with it?" "Keep it until we are safely off the steamer," Dr. Browning begged. "Bring it to me the moment after we land. I

You say. The little man leaned back upon his gets hold of the documents. Brooke tiptoed his way out of the

stateroom and sat in his steamer chair upon the deck for an hour without Then he rose and made his

moving. Then he rose and made his way to the second-class portion of the ship, where he found Constance in a sheltered corner.

"Supposing," he said, "I was able to help toward the clearing up of this little affair, I take it that it would be a sort of satisfaction to you?"

"It would be more than that," she

answered firmly.
"Very well, then," he continued. am by way of making a bargain. Sup-posing I succeed, will you lunch with me at the Waldorf-Astoria at 1 o'clock on the day after we arrive, and will you promise to let me know your where-abouts for the first month of your stay in New York? She looked at him, a little softened-

would be to you," she remarked.
"My lookout, that, isn't it?" he reinded her gently.

"I havent any clothes to come out to ocheon, in." she told him. "If you will wear the clothes," he re-

on the steamer she interrupted, a little defiantly, I couldn't come abroad without a new said softly, "so wonderful as to realize these things going on around you; to watch other people and wonder what

"It's a bargain, then." "Aren't you going to tell me any-them."
thing?" she asked.

"Not at present," he replied. "To tell answered, "because that sort of thing you the truth, there's so much that I is a bit of hobby of mine, too, Found another post yet?"

The end of the voyage, so eagerly looked forward to by many of the pas-sengers, was certainly not disappointing in the matter of sensation. The steamer was boarded in the har-

bor by two detectives, whose every movement was watched with intense interest. They made their way at once to the captain's cabin, where they renained for at least a quarter of an hour. came face to face with Mr. Gordon he reasoned, after a minute's cog Black. He was smoking a large cigar Better wait, indeed, than run it and, so far from showing any signs of "You had joined Blessing," said he discomfiture, accosted the two men and slowly, looking at her with frank dislowly, looking at her with frank dislowly, looking at her with frank dislowly. and, so far from showing any signs of shook hands with them. A slight sense of disappointment began to manifest it- detective work."

talking to no one nor showing any signs talking across to her confidentially. of imminent action. It seemed too, as "What do you say to a parfnership-though the murderer of Mr. Blessing business—with me as the other members to walk off the ship unmolested ber of the firm?" he suggested. Let's Then there was a little commotion at open a detective bureau he companionway. Two of the stew- there's a world of work waiting-on

out. He was wearing a shore-going tal for such a venture," said she. "I have not change farewells with those of the pasty, he was doing his best to exchange farewells with those of the pasty."

She shook her head. I have no capital for such a venture, "said she. "I must stay here and fight."

"You have your brains and your typewriter," said he, his face glowing engers whom he passed.

His chair was set down close to the can't remain here friendless, with no

gangway and within a few feet of the detectives. At that moment Brooke strolled up. He pointed to the chair. "I give that man in charge, officer,"
he said to the nearer detective, "for
the murder of William Blessing on known talent as a business experience against my capital
and join the venture."
"There's a great field—with your well-known talent as a business asset," she

wanted to speak to you most particular."

Brooke made his way down below at once. The little man was lying half-dressed upon the sofa berth and his appearance was ghastly. He motioned Brooke to close the door.

"Sorry to find you queer," the latter remarked cheerfully. "This weather's enough to knock any one over."

this boat."

Brooke mithout raising admitted, catching some of his fire.

"Then let's call it done!" he exclaimed. "We'll return by the next steamer, and I'll have you near me, at least, while I—" he caught himself, his face paling, as if afraid.

"While you?" she smiled. "Wait," said he.

She offered her hand. "A strictly made an instinctive movement toward.

"I'm nearly done," was the reply, "I him he tripped up with a didnt reckon upon this. Please listen." which was simply amazing.

"Anything I can do for you—" They saw him for a moment and heard a splash. Then every one rushed her solemn eyes.

"I'll wait," said he.

"Great heavens!" Brooke exclaimed.
"You didn't see the fellow, did you?"

The doctor shook his head. He was speaking with the utmost difficulty.
"I saw nothing, but I heard the fall of something just outside my door, which was about a foot open. I dragged myself there. I picked up this."

He opened his cost: a long envelope. their late steamer companio

Constance arrived punctually at the Waldorf on the following morning, Brooke led her to the table which he had reserved and watched the color stream into her cheeks as she bent over The little doctor paused for several th roses which were lying by her plate, moments to recover his breath.

"Well," he announced cheerfully, "I've ordered luncheon—all manner of

"What do you mean?" she asked, half indignantly.

"Never mind," he replied. "I can see you are bubbling over with ques-tions. Read the papers this morning?" She shook her head,

She shook her "I've been too busy."
"Then I'll have to tell you a few "Then I'll have to tell you a few "The whole af-"Then I'll have to the state of facts first," he said. "The whole affair hinges around the great struggle between Gordon Black and Seth Pryor. Black stepped over the line a bit and the leave the country. The document had to leave the country. The docu-ments which would have incriminated him were in England.

Blessing went over, as Pryor's agent, to buy them. Our little friend, Dr. Browning, who has a dozen aliases, and who is more wanted by the New York police than any other man on earth, was also on to the game, only what shall be at No. 387, the Waldorf-Asstoria. My room is already engaged. I shall lie there and wait for you."

Brooke thrust the packet into the breast pocket of his tweed coat, which the wanted was to steal the papers. Very well. Blessing gets them. Gordon Black, acting on a hint he received from New York, sails for home.

"Dr. Browning—Tim, the New York was also on to the game, only what toria. My room is already engaged. I shall lie there and wais for you."

Brooke thrust the packet into the breast pocket of his tweed coat, which he buttoned up closely.

"Very well," he promised, "I'll do as you say."

well. Blessing gets them. Gordon Black, acting on a hint he received from New York, sails for home.

"Dr, Browning—Tim, the New York police call him—books on the same steamer. Tim murders Blessing and you say."

got them, he tries to think out the safest way to make use of them. Blessing was murdered outside his door. On the whole, it is safer for him to land in New York without those documents

in his possession.
"He pitches on the most ingenuouslooking of his fellow-passengers and hands them over to me to take care of. One or two little things about the man, however, during the last few days, gave me to think, as one says. him like a lynx for the last twenty-four hours and was convinced that he

"I shamming. The rest is obvious."

"And what about Mr. "And what a Black?" she asked. about Mr. "Therein," Brooke replied, "lies the

numor of the situation, if one can use such a word at all in connection with the affair. The two great factions headed by Black and Seth Pryor made peace one day last week. The docu-ments for which our little friend hoped and yet suspicious.

"I can't see what satisfaction that to get \$1,000,000, and for which Mr. Black had actually bid £25,000, are valueless. Quite a dramatic little business, wasn't it?"
"What about the note which you saw

Mr. Gordon Black receive on deck?"
"That was from Browning, although which you wore when you came he didn't sign it." Brooke explained. cuments were still in existence "There isn't anything in life,"

> secrets they are carrying about with "I'm glad you feel like that," Brooke

"Not yet."
"I offer you one," he declared, filling her glass with hock. "Secretary, com-

panion, and-

She put out her hand, checking him, as if his words had smitten her with poignant edge.
"No, no," she pleaded, her soft eyes appealing to him sorrowfully; "wait, please wait!"

He lapsed into thoughtful silence. Perhaps he was pushing the matter rath-When they returned to the deck they er indelicately, somewhat hastily. So he reasoned, after a minute's cogitation.

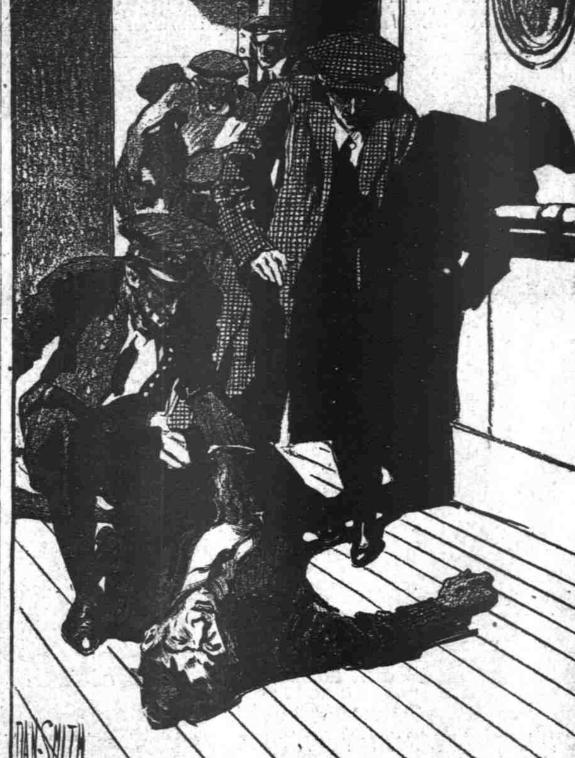
rectness, "and meant to help him in his of disappointment began to manifest itself among the passengers. They were now almost up to the landing stage and nothing had happened.

Mr. Gordon Black, whose arrest by the New York police had been looked upon as a certainty, remained very much at liberty. The two detectives were the leaned his elbows on the table,

ards emerged, carrying a steamer chair equal terms."

She shook her head. "I have no capiupon which Dr. Browning was stretched She shook her head. "I have no capiupon which Dr. Browning was stretched She shook her head. "I have no capiupon which Dr. Browning was stretched to the shook her head."

made an instinctive movement toward business partnership, Mr. Brooke," she him he tripped up with a dexterity blushed. "And you must promise me not to mention not to to was a supplication almost painful in



Brooke looked down upon it with a shudder.

other suggestions? I'm getting rather

She shook her head.

"Of course you will," he declared There was no longer any doubt, encouragingly, "Make up your mind Tragedy and Mr. Gordon Black walked that you're going to get better. That's hand in hand!

half-closed eyes, looking out upon the

His thoughts wandered from the pathetic little figure by his side to, Mr. "Sure he meant me?" Brooke asked, Gordon Black, who was strolling up a little puzzled, and down the deck smoking a cigar. "Certainly, sir," the man replied. "He Brooke felt a peculiar interest in study-ing the dark, handsome face. That the man had been a bold ad-

around the deck for a moment, and, Brooke began, finally advancing to Gordon Black, "Two night-

"Dr. Browning, the old gentleman who is ill, would take it as a great favor if you would step down to his stateroom for a moment. The poor gentleman's very bad indeed, sir," he added confidentially

fidentially.
"Sure he meant me?" Brooke asked,

enough to knock any one over."
"I'm nearly done," was the reply, "I